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MEMORANDUM TO ASSISTANT CHIEF, MEDITERRANEAN BUREAU

SUBJECT: QUALIFICATIONS FOR FBI MONITOR

1. Foreign Language. Knowledge of foreign language must be practically equivalent to well-educated native's, to understand fully through bad reception and inferior recording. Summarizing requires grasp of only gist of material in detail; but typing -- and practically all copy sent to Washington is text -- requires hearing and understanding every word and phrase, and indicating definitely all omissions or glosses in translation. M

Multilingual ability is of value, in spite of organization into language sections: e.g., Italian, French, Czech and Slovak are not important enough at Mediterranean Bureau to hire linguists for, but some coverage might be of value if they are available as secondary languages; good Russian-Polish-Bulgarian linguists would provide flexibility in assignments.

2. English. Properly, command of English should be better than good, should be of quality of U. S. newspaper editor. Concessions in this respect may be made to necessity to the extent that you can economically employ additional editors as rewrite men without slowing down processing. It should be borne in mind that field copy must be finished product; rewriting is not a function of departmental editors.

3. Editorial judgement. Except for the mechanics, monitoring requires pretty complete editorial qualifications, for it makes the first selection and interpretation of broadcast material. Elements are intelligence, college education or equivalent experience, interest in and thorough acquaintance with current international affairs, including familiarity with details, particularly place and personal names in the focus of national or international attention.

4. Hearing. The auditory sense must be unusually keen; hence linguists past forty are not likely to be adequate. On the other hand, ears must be stalwart enough to endure straining throughout a workday without excessive fatigue.

5. Typing. Touch typing not required, but minimum of forty words per minute visual typing is necessary, with higher speeds an advantage.

6. Adaptability. This requirement, based upon the peculiarity of the operation, is another factor in favor of young applicants. Monitor must learn, for example, to type English summaries at the same time he is listening to the broadcast in a foreign language.

7. Temperament. The monitor's operation is all at a much higher speed than usual translation work, having newspaper office tempo in general. The deliberate, scholarly type of candidate is not likely to be successful. On the other hand, a very nervous person is not likely to be able to stand up long under the pressure.

PKB:bkr  
cc: Admin. Office

1948-1949, Chief, Field Division

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